

Total War Feared If We Invade Cuba

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One major reason why the American people are not too keen about invading Cuba and overthrowing Fidel Castro is the fear that such action is likely to bring about an all-out war between the U. S. and Soviet Russia.

At the same time, the public shows considerable skepticism about the likelihood of the Cuban people themselves rising up and throwing Castro out of power within the next few years.

The current degree of skepticism indicates a marked change in Americans' attitudes about the duration of the Castro regime. Two years ago, for example, the consensus was that the bearded Cuban Premier would be out of power within the coming twelve months.

In probing the state of public opinion with regard to the Cuban problem, Gallup Poll reporters across the U. S. asked this question:

"If the U.S. sends troops to Cuba to try to overthrow Castro and the Communists, do you think this is or not likely to bring about an all-out war between the United States and Russia?"

The results:

WAR WITH RUSSIA IF WE INVADE CUBA?

Is likely 37%
Is not 37
No opinion 12

As reported earlier by the Gallup Poll, the American people are no more inclined to invade Cuba now than they were a year and a half ago just after the abortive Bay of

Pigs invasion by anti-Castro Cuban forces.

Further analysis shows that the reluctance to go into Cuba with U.S. troops is clearly motivated by a fear of the larger consequences of such a move.

Among those persons who fear that a war with Russia is likely to ensue, the vote on invading Cuba is as follows:

ALL-OUT WAR LIKELY

Should invade 19%
Should not 69
No opinion 12

Among those who do not think a U. S. invasion will trigger a larger conflict, however, pro-invasion sentiment is much more marked:

ALL-OUT WAR UNLIKELY

Should invade 36%
Should not 57
No opinion 7

With a U. S. invasion ruled out by many through fear of what this might mean in terms of all-out war, how likely do American think it is that the people of Cuba themselves will overthrow Castro?

"Some people say that within the next two or three years the people of Cuba will overthrow Castro and the Communists. Do you think this is or is not likely to happen?"

WILL CUBANS THROW CASTRO OUT OF POWER?

Is likely 41%
Is not 43
No opinion 16

Indications from an earlier survey are that the public feels that there is no lack of desire to have Castro out of office on the part of the Cuban people.

Just after the ill-fated invasion in April, 1961, for example, seven out of ten Americans said they thought that Castro would be defeated if a free and honest election were held throughout Cuba.